

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1                   1.       A method for preparing for intraductal retrieval of fluid, cells  
2 and/or other material from a breast duct of a patient, comprising:  
3                   administering an agent to the patient that increases retrievable fluid from a  
4 breast duct.

1                   2.       A method as in claim 1, wherein administering is accomplished by  
2 a mode selected from the group consisting of administering the agent intraductally,  
3 administering the agent systemically, and administering the agent topically.

1                   3.       A method as in claim 2, wherein the agent is administered  
2 intraductally to a breast duct, and the agent is selected from the group consisting of saline,  
3 phosphate buffered saline (PBS), an isotonic solution, a hypotonic solution, a buffered  
4 solution, a solution having a pH range of human tissue, blood or sera, a solution having a  
5 slightly acid pH, a solution having a slightly basic pH, and a nonabsorbable  
6 biocompatible solution.

1                   4.       A method as in claim 2, wherein the agent is administered  
2 systemically and comprises an agent selected from the group consisting of a hormone,  
3 oxytocin, prolactin, a breast duct secretion inducing factor, a natural herb or extract from  
4 a natural herb, silymarin, a growth factor, a vitamin, a protein, a muscle relaxant, and a  
5 small organic molecule.

1                   5.       A method as in claim 2, wherein the agent is administered  
2 intraductally to a breast duct, and the agent is selected from the group consisting of a  
3 protein, a colloid, a sugar, a polymer, mannitol, sorbitol, glucose, glycerol, sucrose,  
4 raffinose, fructose, lactulose, sodium chloride, polyethyleneglycol (PEG), maltodextrin,  
5 dextran (e.g. dextran 70), hydroxyethyl starch, fluid gelatin, a synthetic colloid, an  
6 antibody, a binding protein, albumin, a hormone, a breast duct secretion inducing factor, a  
7 natural herb or extract from a natural herb, silymarin, a surfactant, a growth factor,  
8 oxytocin, prolactin, a small organic molecule, a muscle relaxant, a ductal orifice dilator,  
9 and an agent that increases fluid secretion from a breast duct epithelium.

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